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ABSTRACT

One approach by the state of Georgia to ensure equal educational opportunity for all children has been to organize a method whereby several school systems within an identified geographical region may share services they cannot afford to provide individually. By legislative action in 1972, provisions for Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) were established. The state was divided into 16 geographical regions and the administrative personnel in each region were given the option of organizing a CESA agency to serve their educational needs. The CESA concept is to share, across school district lines, services that are designed to improve the effectiveness of the educational programs of member school systems. The organizational process for the Northeast Georgia CESA area is briefly described to illustrate several additional principles that appear to have applications to any program of change. (Author/MLF)

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SHARING ACROSS SCHOOL SYSTEM LINES

WITH

COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY

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The education process is very complex. With 30 % of the tax dollar designated for this purpose, there is an increasing demand to be accountable for the expenditures of these funds. Numerous services that should be provided for all children may be unavailable in some rural areas of the state where funds and personnel are inadequate to meet these increasing demands. Recent federal legislation, mandating that appropriate education be provided for every child, illustrates the necessity of providing very specialized services to meet unique student needs.

The State of Georgia has engaged in various efforts to insure equal educational opportunity for all children. One approach to achieve this goal has been to organize a method whereby several school systems within an identified geographical region may share services they cannot afford to provide individually.

By legislative action in 1972, provisions for Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) were established. (Appendix 1) The State was divided into sixteen geographical regions and the administrative personnel in each region was given the option of organizing a CESA agency to serve their educational needs. The CESA concept is to share, across school district lines, services which are designed to improve the effectiveness of the educational

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programs of member school systems.

The State Board of Education has the responsibility for adopting rules, regulations, procedures, standards, and criteria for the establishment and operation of CESAs. (Appendix 2) Each CESA is governed by a Board of Control composed of the Superintendent or other designated official from each participating school system. Participation by individual school systems is voluntary. Those who choose to participate, contribute at a rate determined by the Board of Control. Financing of the agency consists of an annual allotment of State funds, local contributions from member school systems and competitive grants from state and federal sources.

By briefly describing the organizational process for our particular unit, I hope to illustrate several additional principles that appear to have applications to any program of change. Of the thirteen school systems in the ten county area, identified as the Northeast Georgia CESA area, twelve superintendents elected to organize and support a CESA agency. They elected at that time to provide local support in the amount of $1.00 per pupil annually, based upon average daily attendance, an amount that would be inadequate for an agency not located near a College or University. Local commitment, as demonstrated through voluntary participation is essential if progress is to be made.

These superintendents set as an immediate objective to contract with the University of Georgia to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. Available data, including felt needs of local school system personnel were carefully compiled, analyzed, and

and presented to a cross section of local system personnel. Alternative staffing patterns were presented, with anticipated strengths and weaknesses outlined for each pattern. The local system personnel were the ones responsible for the final selection. (Appendix 3) Consultants were carefully selected to fit the illustrated pattern.

Currently, our staff consists of thirty-five members. There are four generalists who are primarily responsible for overall program continuity. Nineteen staff members are specialists, consisting of sixteen in Special Education, two in Early Childhood, and one in Vocational Education.

The concept represented by our staffing pattern can be adapted to numerous situations if suitable personnel are available who can be called upon for consultant or instructional assistance in specific areas.

It is evident that effective services require ample funding. (Appendix 4) The illustration of the FY 77 income sources, indicate the necessity for seeking supplementary funds from various sources. In addition to the amounts listed are numerous projects written together with local school personnel and funded through the school system.

Long-range, coordinated planning is one of the keys to success when seeking to achieve change. A staff member, the generalist, maintains continuing contact with an identified group of school systems. He/She works with the local system personnel to identify needs, develop a plan of action, and conduct program evaluation on a regular basis.

Specialists are employed in areas of continuing need as identified by the original needs assessment or subsequent evaluations. In-service training and on-the-job experiences promote the development of generalist skills among these specialists. CESA consultants contract with University personnel or other qualified persons to assist in achieving goals where our staff lacks experience.

Support services (Appendix 5) such as cooperative purchasing and both maintenance and repair of audio-visual and business machines, are often requested of a CESA organization. These operations are basically self-supporting and represent a substantial savings for the Superintendents.

Cooperative purchasing required a large capital investment to become operational; therefore, three adjacent CESAs co-sponsored this agency. The illustration reveals purchases made from all of the systems. Audio visual and business machines services provide an estimated savings of approximately 50%.

I believe CESA is proving itself to be a necessary educational agency in Georgia. An organization such as this is a valuable vehicle for stimulating school systems to evaluate themselves and to seek improvement.

Opportunities for continued development are certainly before us in areas such as printing, special education, administrative and instructional use of computer services, comprehensive

planning, and early childhood-primary coordination. I am enthusiastic about progress made thus far with this program of sharing and am hopeful that we can continue to develop as an integral part of Georgia's educational program.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY

C E S A's

PURPOSE: EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH SHARING

APPENDIX 2

C E S A C O N C E P T S

ASSURE LOCAL CONTROL

- LOCAL GOVERNING BODY
- PARTIAL FUNDING THROUGH LOCAL SUPPORT
- LOCAL INVOLVEMENT IN ALL PROGRAMMING EFFORTS

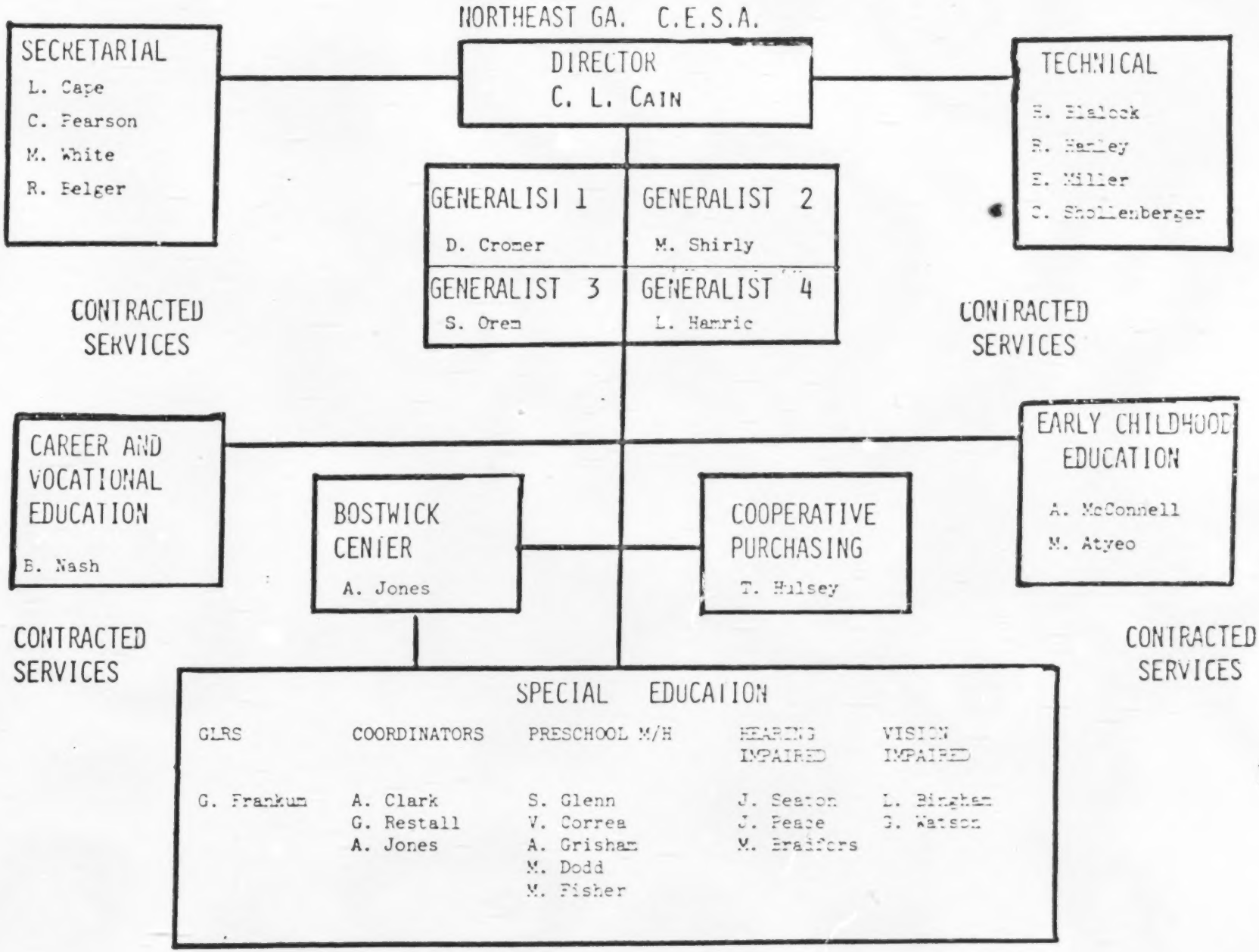
LINK WITH A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY IF POSSIBLE

DEVELOP STAFFING PATTERN BASED UPON IDENTIFIED NEEDS

PROVIDE DIRECT SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

FOCUS UPON LONG-RANGE PLANNING

- STAFF DEVELOPMENT
- COORDINATED SYSTEM FOR PARAPROFESSIONAL TRAINING
- CURRICULUM EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT
- COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING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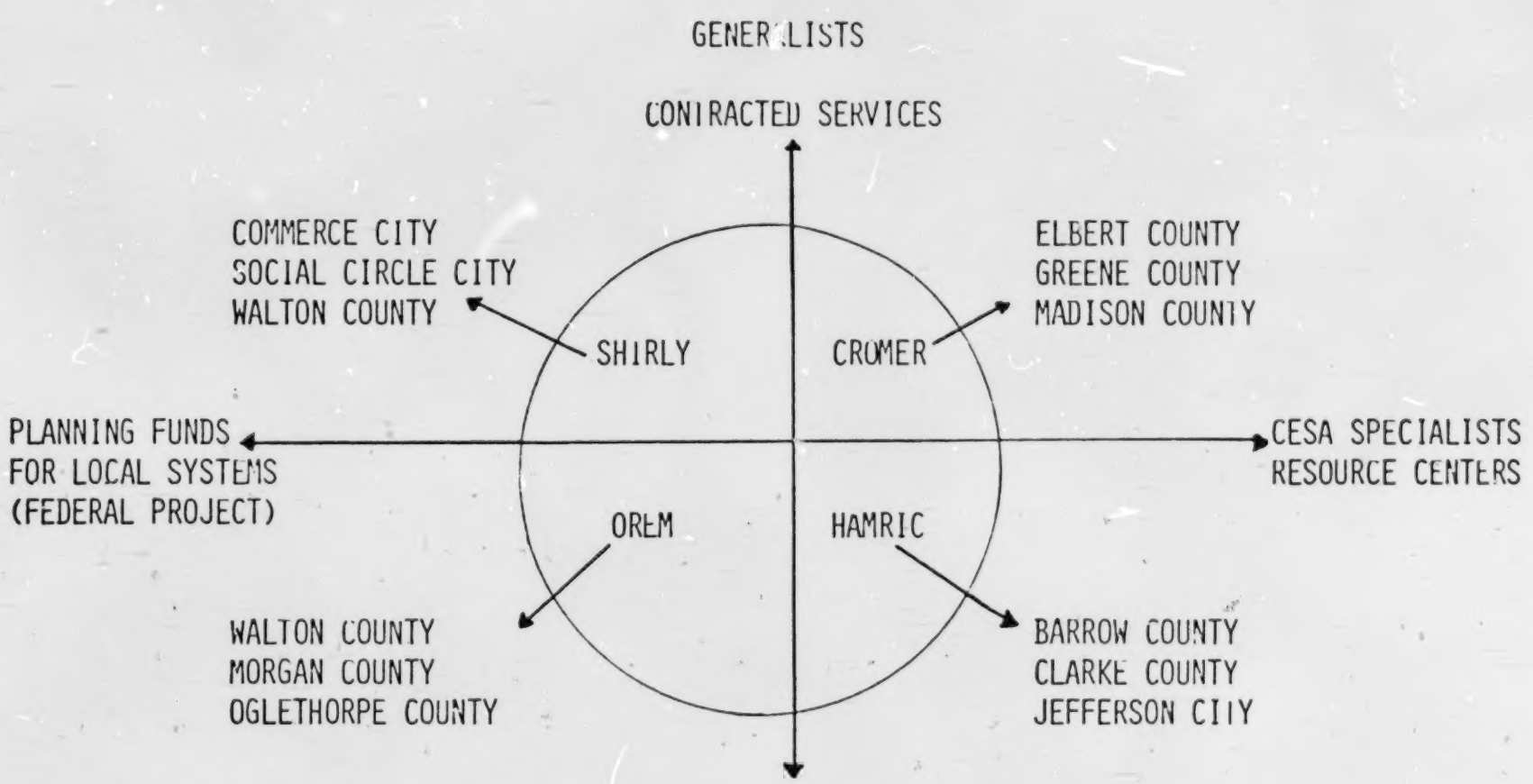
APPENDIX 5

CESA 5 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX 4

NORTHEAST GEORGIA CESA

INCOME - FY 1977

LOCAL SUPPORT

@ $1.50 PER PUPIL ADA

STATE ALLOTMENT

FEDERAL GRANTS

TOTAL INCOME

SOURCES OF GRANT FUNDS

TITLE IV C

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	76,000
FACILITATOR FUNDS	12,500

TITLE VI

SPECIAL EDUCATION	195,000

EACH OF THE 12 SCHOOL SYSTEMS HAVE RECEIVED A/A GRANTS
2 X @ 15,000 EACH